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BEING RECONCILED TO GOD.

It is a peculiarity of the New Testament writings that they are continually gathering up the whole scope of their doctrine into some one or another brief and comprehensive phrase, so that, whenever such an expression is repeated, we feel that the very heart of the gospel is condensed into that one sentence. These vary in their form; but they evidently intend the same thing. So men are told here to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" there to "repent and be converted," or "be born again;" elsewhere to "take up the cross;" and elsewhere still, as in the text, to "be reconciled to God." Trace any of these summaries of duty back a little way, and you find that it is a key that throws open the whole plan of salvation. Take the one before us: "Reconciled" from what? The very syllables of the word imply that there has been a wrong life, some mistaken choice to be repented of, some alienation to be healed, an estrangement to be recovered out of, a prodigal wandering to return from; all of which are only equivalents to a state of sin. "Reconciled," then, to whom? To the God that never was estranged from us; that never needed to be reconciled nor pacified. Into submission to his will; into obedience to his authority; into acquiescence with the justice of his government; into repentance for offending him; into faith unfeigned in his condescending compassion. But "reconciled" how, or by what means? You have only to return a little upon the record, and you find how; for it is written, a few

lines above, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" and "God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, which is this, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Christ, then, is the way; faith in him is the inspiring energy; his truth is the guide; his cross, the covenant of our forgiveness for the past; his resurrection, the pledge of our eternal residence in the kingdom of heaven. So is the entire and glorious circle of Christian doctrines concentrated in this beseeching, where Christ himself beseeches by the mouth of his ambassadors, "Be ye reconciled to God."

We need not hesitate a moment, then, as to what the evangelical message is that God charges every ear to hear. It stands out bright and unmistakable on every page of the New Testament. To superadd to our natural life, as we pass on into experience, a new, spiritual life; to awaken in the soul, too prone to sink into the death of trespasses and sins, a sense of its immortal relations; to plant the germ of Christian faith, and then to nourish it as it opens into all the virtues and graces of a saintly character,—this is the high purpose of every true ambassador for Christ.

Was there ever a time or a place where that doctrine was more needed than ours? Let the proud sweep of our commercial and industrial activity answer. Look into the corrupting influences of our material prosperity,—into the superficial habits of a great city,—into the luxurious apparatus of temptation woven through every street, where conscience is stifled by the senses, and where the passions brutify reason; hear the flippant and empty tone of society, almost as discouraging to any spiritual approach as vice itself, to which it so perilously tends; notice the arrogance of wealth and the insolence of its victims; watch the whirlpools of fashionable frivolity, drawing in your sons and daughters, not to honest cheerfulness or rational pleasure, but to unholy competitions, and strifes that fatally blot the heart; see the neglect of worship, the decline of reverence, and the madness of gain; nay, look inward, question the tendencies of your own soul, examine the real worth of your pursuits, the course of your business, the home of your affections, and say if there is any word in all human speech more needful for our peace than that word of Paul, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth;" or if it is strange that Christ should charge his ambassadors to beseech us, "Be ye reconciled to God."

THE TWOFOLD SORROW.

YOUNG mother! she is gone!
 Bend low thy knee beside her little bier,
 Thine own, thy precious one!
 Her murmured words thou never more may'st hear;
 Hushed is the little fluttering breath,
 Set is the solemn seal of death
 On the dear face thy yearning gaze beneath:
 Young mother! she is gone!

"Gone! gone! It cannot be!
 E'en now methinks I see
 Her sweet lips parted with a smile!
 Those lisping words, that did my heart beguile
 Of all its pain, still linger in mine ear;
 She *is not* dead! I cannot leave her here!

"My darling! my first-born!
 Her little cheek will yet be pressed
 Life-warm upon my throbbing breast;
 Those first soft accents from her faltering tongue,
 On which I with a mother's rapture hung,
 Once more will waken unto me
 Earth's dearest, sweetest melody:
 Oh, *do not* tell me she is gone!

"He whom duty called away,
 Just as his name she'd learned to say,
 Will soon return, with joy to greet
 Those little busy hasting feet;
 And he and I, with answering smiles,
 Will meet her playful, winning wiles,
 Our beautiful! our own!
 His name! She murmured it but now,
 Ere settled on her lip, her brow,
 This cold, drear stillness: *can* it be
 That he will but come home to see
 Our darling in the tomb?"

"Come home?" Oh nevermore,
 Poor mourner! Forth hath gone that dread decree!
 On Time's fast-waning shore
 His spirit hovers, — eager to be free!
 He whispers, "It is well; they soon will follow me."
 E'en now, as earth recedes, grows distant, dim,
 His cherub-child "at heaven's gate waits to welcome" him,
God calls them home!

Bereaved one, look above!
 He is a God of love!
 His arms shall thy sure shield and safeguard be;
 For oh he loveth, while he chasteneth thee!
 Thine heart grows weary with its weight of woe;
 But God, who doth afflict thee so,
 Bends down from heaven his pitying ear;
His love shall dry each grief-torn tear:
He hears thy moan!

Oh may He to thy stricken heart
 His all-pervading peace impart:
 A few short fleeting years at best,
 And thou with them shalt then find rest, —
 Rest with those dear ones to thy fond arms given
 For a brief space; then from them riven,
 To be thy treasures *evermore* in heaven!

E. A. C.

WHEN we are tempted to murmur at the constant repetition of our daily duties, and feel weary of doing the same task day after day, let us call to mind the solemn fact, that we have but one opportunity given us to perform any duty faithfully; and it is only through this daily and hourly devotedness and fidelity that we can ever expect to make any progress toward Christian perfection.

ORTHODOX AND LIBERAL.

At present, without pretending to an exhausting classification, we may speak, in a general way, of two conspicuous tendencies in the religious thought of the times, under the two well-understood names, — Liberalism and Orthodoxy. To avoid misconception, I may as well say here that I cannot bring myself to believe that in either one of these divisions as now known, or in any of the sects they severally embrace, exists the truth of doctrine, the truth of organization, or the truth of moral life, as these are to be witnessed hereafter, whenever the church complete and triumphant is revealed. But it may serve a useful purpose, warning us against error, and promoting charitable judgments, to note the merits and deficiencies of each system.

The sects that fall under the title of Liberalism are generally characterized by freedom and boldness of inquiry, lax ecclesiastical organizations and discipline, an absence of formality, and a preference of the practical over the doctrinal aspects of religion, — as of morals over piety, and of philanthropy over devotion. The sects that fall under the title of Orthodoxy have more exact creeds, more deference to established standards, more regular habits of government and obedience, and more prayer; with less individuality, less respect for good works, less faith in progress. The advantage of Liberalism is, that it is not embarrassed in its action by ecclesiastical precedents; of Orthodoxy, that it inherits precious associations. Orthodoxy has not cut itself off, by any act of violence, from the general assent of Protestant Christendom. Liberalism has not sworn to stand still. Orthodoxy is endangered by formalism; Liberalism, by irreverence. Orthodoxy speaks in that old dialect which believers have heard so long, endeared by the fragrant breath of ages of piety, wherein every word has a meaning and a value beyond its literal contents; and so it leans towards a lifeless repetition of these phrases, — which is cant; or the unfeeling enforcement of them, in articles, upon minds that do not recognize their beauty, — which is impotence. Liberalism chooses where it will for its terms, gaining freshness, but missing transmitted power, and constantly tempted to forsake the best of all, the scriptural, simply because its opponent has

preoccupied them with its interpretations. It has sometimes been intimated, as a charge against Unitarians addicted to the evangelical phraseology, that they employ orthodox language without espousing the orthodox belief. That appearance has its explanation, I suspect, only in the fact that such persons return to those scriptural expressions which have become heirlooms in the old churches, and which, although now associated with special creeds, and so brought under suspicion with many, are really borrowed, not from these creeds, but from the Bible. Liberalism wants faith in Christ; Orthodoxy wants faith in man. Liberalism wants piety; Orthodoxy wants charity. Liberalism wants bonds of veneration to the Sovereign God; Orthodoxy wants a generous confidence in the soul, and justice to those divine laws whereby truth is sought, gained, taken up into life, and made a practical reality.

The question occurs, how the different sects in the church, honestly differing as to many of their convictions, and each, of course, bound to extend its own and not another's, shall be able to speak to one another. As soon as they begin to express their religious faith, they use different phrases and terms; and however sincerely they use them, the language of one party sounds like jargon or cant to another. Obviously this does much to hinder Christian fellowship. I have known two persons whose hearts were both warm with the same religious emotion, and both yearning for communion, to be no sooner brought together than they were driven wide apart again, and all their sympathy was dispelled by this want of common terms to express themselves in. Where shall this common language be sought? Can we do better than to seek it just where God's inspiration has written it, and his providence preserved it, in the Bible,—the great treasury and store-house of all devout speech? Let the biblical phraseology be kept familiar, irrespective of differences. If certain sects have appropriated certain phrases, prevent its ever happening again, by using them all. They are as open to one as to another. No monopoly attaches to that wealth of the world. And whatever experience, whatever doctrine, whatever want, whatever hope or faith, you have to utter, search the literatures of the ages and the libraries of nations through, you will find no words so exact, so comprehensive, so rich, so sure to tell your meaning, as these everlasting oracles. Surely we need not lack creeds, as long as the Old and New Testaments are opened in every house. H.

HOPE DESTROYED, HEAVEN GAINED.

WE are surrounded by objects that attract our affections, and entwine round themselves our hopes. Some among these objects are so pure in their nature, and so elevating in their tendencies, that we cannot conceive ourselves to be doing wrong when we set our hearts upon them. Our kind Father gives us relatives and friends, who seem entitled by their personal attractions, the amiableness of their temper, and the love they bear us, to our utmost possible regard. Is it not right that we entertain high anticipations as we look upon them? Why may we not count with confidence on their coming years, and put far from our thoughts the evil day? They occupy, we feel, a place in our bosom, that not only impulse, but our calmest judgment, approves. Why should we not love them with our whole souls? And why, this regard being so reasonable, should they not be spared to us so long as we live?

But He who gave the blessing claims the right to take it from us. In his inexplicable wisdom, he sees best sometimes to decree that the tenderest bond shall be the first to be riven; where the strength of our hopes had centered, there he sends his destroying angel.

We are stunned by the blow. Darkness has shut in around us, and, in the utter and awful extinction of so many hopes, we cannot perceive one cheering ray. Our spirits join in the lament at Ramah, and for the moment we "refuse to be comforted." Why should one whose life had been a series of kind acts, who had contracted no stain on his spirit-garment, and who never made an enemy, be taken from our arms? In the bitterness of desolation, from sorrow and dust, we feel tempted to lift our eye upward in meek remonstrance. Mysterious event! Why was this, the being I loved as my own soul, the first to be removed from me? O inexorable Power! why hast thou thus destroyed my hope!

But we no sooner check the rising murmur, than we hear that voice which went up by the bier of the widow's son say to us, "Weep not." The hand of my Father hath done this; and he is your Father also, too great to be overpowered by evil in any form whatever; too wise to mistake in the means by which he

would conduct your lost one, and you who survive, to a happy issue, and too good to suffer any possible final harm to touch a single object of your affections. It was in kindness that he implanted in your nature the deep root of hope; his was the blessing-gift; and now that he has withdrawn it, the destroying of that hope was not without grace.

Under the elder covenant, death was esteemed an immitigable evil. It not only cut off man's temporal joy, but it sealed up the future also. It destroyed human hopes everlastingly. The Son of God came to set up bars and bounds to its terrific sweep. "I am the resurrection and the life," said the God-instructed One: "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never taste death." Thus far, grim Power! to the stopping of the breath, to the dissolution of the clayey tenement, shalt thou go, but no farther. I bring what thy frosts cannot harm, — an amaranthine flower. The hope which terminates on earth it is still thine to blight. But I inspire a hope full of immortality.

Let us now approach the grave with Jesus by our side. A new light falls on its portals, a bright exposition is given of its once gloomy work.

God has taken from us, it may be, one in the glow of his existence, and over whom life was bending its bow of promise; but who shall say that this was not the very period best suited for the transition-hour? When one stands on the threshold of this opening and busy world, before care has furrowed his brow, or gold tempted him from the right, or worldliness brushed off the bloom of his purity, why should not the Father, even then, gather that spirit into the upper and safe fold? That one is called away, while life is so largely but a vision of good things to come, is indeed sad; but it is well certainly to go hence before sin cuts its deep grooves in the inner man. The lapse of years leads to increasing temptations, and who would live to fall into their fangs? Who cannot draw comfort, as he looks on the cold form of a friend departed early in life, from the assurance that, had he lived, he must have left a memory shaded by imperfections, if not discolored by sins? Thanks, then, that while the present is dimmed by our grief—

"The future brightens on the sight;
For on the past has fallen a light
That tempts us to adore."

God has destroyed our earthly hope ; he has removed from us, it may be, one who left none that knew him, but mourn for him as a friend. There is solace in the testimonials of such love. The bereaved only can know how sweet are commending words, uttered over the silent form of a lost relative. The parent sheds fresh tears at the rehearsal of the virtues of a son : but those tears are rich in consolation ; every remembered act of kindness is balm to the spirit ; and as one after another recount instances of a generous temper, considerate of others, patient under injury, forbearing and forgiving, they are oil to these bleeding wounds. When it can be said of any one with truth, that in the very season of youth and incipient manhood, when passion is strong, and frivolity and self-indulgence so often overrun the whole character, he was calm, self-controlled, and temperate ; his lips never polluted by profaneness or untruthfulness or guile ; that he was moderate in recreation, and devoted diligently to his calling, then is our sorrow alleviated. We love to recall his good example in being constant in the sanctuary, reverently attentive himself, and a father in his care of brothers and sisters. It is pleasing to hear of tender acts in his final sickness ; of thoughtfulness, sparing a mother's labor, and preventing her tears for himself ; of a patience that never murmured and rebelled, but bore each lingering ailment and every acuter pain with studied composure. As we think of a constant gratitude which still uttered its thanks for each little gift and every personal favor, even while struggling for breath, we grieve for goodness lost. And when we can add allusions to the great exchange of worlds, and submission to the Almighty will, then the odor of all, both the life and the death, as of the rich ointment offered unto Jesus, fills and sanctifies the room.

Those qualities on which we can dwell with such satisfaction, it is true, serve to magnify the sense of our loss. It is sad to see so many virtues snatched from us by the relentless destroyer ; and at the age, too, midway between youth and manhood, the stroke seems peculiarly afflictive. The little child is plucked from us, a tender bud, an undeveloped germ, a promise as yet all unfulfilled ; and we bow therefore in submissiveness. Old age drops into the grave, a shock of corn fully ripe in its season. And the mature man has accomplished a part, a large part, of life's great work ; but at the intermediate period, the reaper is taken just as he is thrusting his bright sickle into the world's tempting harvest. He faints

while the morning sun gilds his unruffled brow; and before the noontide heat, he falls: the gleaming eye is closed, the purple light is quenched, the manly form bows, and we see no more on his once radiant face aught but the last sleep and that parting smile.

Dark is the domestic circle. A mother's joy and confidence have gone from her. The father had trusted in one, soon to fill his place, to enter on his cares and labors, to show the fruit of his instructions, and to transmit them, improved by his own superior advantages, to a coming generation. But that hope is destroyed; society mourns; a band of companions are stricken in their midst. One who trod with them the paths of childhood's lessons, in the week-day and on the sabbath, and who shared their guileless recreations, will no more greet them as they gather in coming hours. Their pleasant walks, their confiding interviews, their mutual congratulations at life's opening scenes, all are now terminated. They pause in their pleasures, and speak to one another with bated breath, and go in sad fellowship, at the funeral call, to take their last look of him who was very pleasant to them in life.

A hope is destroyed, too, in our community. As we look on one of unblemished character, coming forward to the labors and responsibilities of life, we picture to ourselves the good he will accomplish among his associates and friends, in his vicinity, by his example as a citizen, a patriot, and a Christian. The race can ill spare a virtuous young man. His departure leaves a chasm, by which benevolence and humanity are made sad; and wisdom and purity and piety gather in heaviness around his grave.

But the loss of youth is not unaccompanied by compensations. The departure of the good gives a prominence and a power to their influence. It is true of them, as of all other blessings, that we do not realize their value until they are taken from us. An inmate of our family may be every day studying our happiness, performing thousands of unnamable kindnesses, and we, through the force of habit, be hardly aware of his presence. But let him leave our roof, and we feel a deep void; and if he have gone on the long and last journey, we are touched by the memory of an unappreciated sympathy, a goodness constant as the sunshine. In our lonely meditations, instances of self-sacrifice, of high principle, and warm affection, come clustering through the mind; every object in our dwelling becomes associated with the lost one.

We meet one and another who bring to memory new illustrations of his manifold excellences. The world, that stern tribunal which judges the dead alone with a final impartiality, testify now to those merits which indifference, envy, or some other unamiable passion perhaps, had concealed from their view during the life of the departed; and this enumeration of vanished virtues is most natural.

No moment in our connection with a friend so impresses on us his best qualities as the period of his death. They loom up then from the thick shades of the past, bright and beautiful. We linger over every wise and generous deed until we prize it aright. Now we can interpret his motives, and comprehend the true breadth and depth of his goodness. All the approbation we ever bestowed on him seems but to fill his just measure. The ear is open, and it hears with clear faith the welcome and confirmatory decision of the tribunal on high.

Those who go away in the meridian of their promise are sent to earth again, and often to bless the surviving. They become preachers of righteousness, addressing the conscience with a power such as no length of years and no living worth could have given them. We may have refused him that spake to us on earth; but we cannot turn away from him who, girt round with an immortal atmosphere, speaks to us from heaven.

The early dead teach those of their own age impressive truths. They utter from their sealed lips the praise of youthful piety. God has given his pledge, "They that seek me early shall find me." Old age may fail of it; but childhood and youth are certain of his boundless blessing. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. The cold form of the departed young is eloquent to our thoughtless hearts: it bids us look on that face, and say what we should desire were we soon to occupy the same place. For what would our failing strength then ask? A commending conscience, and the prayer of sympathy; a voice inviting us to look up to our Father, and to lean on him as we tread the deep valley before us, prayer responding to our secret petitions. Oh, what is so precious to a departing spirit?

The hours of consumption are beset by alternate hope and fear. But the end must come, and how suddenly may the breath cease! Happy for us if the hope of returning health has been checked by a steadfast reliance on that hope beyond the reach of death. They

who leave us young, testify that in one's closing days gold becomes dross. They tell us, that character, integrity before God and man, and faith in Christ, are the downy pillow on which death is met without fear. If we would have a happy dissolution, we must be holy from the beginning. The child, the youth, the young man, — there must be no moral break in his life. He who never goes out of the way will not be compelled to retrace his steps with shame and anguish. Give life's dawn to Christ, to Christian principle, to a generous virtue, and its midday will be unclouded, its sundered cord will release you at last, only that you may ascend to higher joys.

The joys of Christian goodness, of piety, purity, a holy love ! O that youth would believe in these joys ! Pleasure vanishes with the night ; but true happiness fills the livelong day. A pure-hearted, faithful, devoted young man, — where, if not to him, can we point for a well-spring of enjoyment ? There is nothing loud or excited, it is true, in his happiness : such feelings are all evanescent. His is the abiding, calm satisfaction of a heart at peace with God, and at peace with man ; it is the perpetual sunshine of a spirit conscious of its relations to eternal scenes, cheerful in labor, and no stoic in recreation, but drinking still its deepest delights from affections flowing out liberally on home and companions, and from a serene conscience, testifying of passions subdued, of duty done, of usefulness to all, of a goal, whether reached earlier or later, where is laid up for him a diadem of glory.

They who mourn a youth lost from their dwelling, a son and a brother, have a new treasure laid up in heaven. As the Redeemer went before his disciples to prepare a place for them, so has the Father sent one before them to draw their hearts upward. They grieve for their own loss. Jesus wept at the grave of a friend, but his sorrow was soon turned into joy ; joy that Lazarus was again with the living, joy that his own supplications were then and always heard. So will God hear the mourner now. No supplication for grace to bear the burden, for an eye to see in it a Father's hand, for a patient resignation to his will, but will be answered to the uttermost. He who destroyeth our earthly hope calls us to seek a diviner trust. For our sakes he takes away the loved one, that with him he may draw our hearts up to himself. Blessed, then, are they that mourn, blessed in

receiving an earnest of that mercy which mingles with every chastening in our cup. Thrice blessed are we if our relatives, lost in youth, so minister to us in our maturity as to lead us to repent of our sins, to consecrate ourselves to Christ and his cross, and to lead a life of faith hallowed by good deeds; for then do we know that where our thoughts and hopes and hearts have gone before us, there at length shall we go to meet the loved and the lost in an eternal reunion.

A. B. M.

 THE BEST FRAGMENT OF TRUTH.

A GARMENT, woven without seam,
Is holiest symbol given
Of truth's entire, unbounded theme,
Embracing earth and heaven.

Man's narrow thought, and dull short sight,
This seamless robe have rent;
The shred each gathers, dim or bright, —
Deemed whole, affords content.

What golden fragments often lie
Trodden by careless feet;
While base alloys, raised up on high,
The ancient strife repeat! —

The strife which dogmas, cold and dead,
From age to age renew,
Keeping our hearts as cold and dead,
And hiding God from view.

Truth, as the heavens, is broad and free,
Fair, and of many sides;
The colored glass through which we see,
Our favorite hue decides.

For some, Truth's purest ray shines forth
From that broad belt of light
Proud Science carries round the earth,
And clasps with stars of night.

And many hear Truth's sweetest tone
In surpliced prelate's voice;
While consecrated walls alone
May in her beams rejoice.

For gentle souls, Truth shows her face
To loving Poet's eye;
And he — blest limner — for his race,
Paints it in Poetry.

Minds, reverent, turn to Sages old,
And Prophets in their might;
The holy mysteries *they* unfold,
For *they* have bathed in light.

But Prophet, Preacher, Bard, and Sage
Are only mirrors, lent,
Reflecting light from age to age,
When they themselves are spent.

August, symmetrical, divine!
Yet broken fragments all,
Whose single rays may cease to shine
Long ere the stars shall fall.

But when thou *doest* a deed sublime
Of sacrifice or love,
It writes itself, insured 'gainst Time,
In the Life-book above.

Then, of Truth's fragments, choose a Life
Thick-set with holy deeds;
With neither God nor Man at strife,
Up to *all* Truth it leads.

LETTER TO A STUDENT IN RELIGION.

"Sanctum," Friday night, March 4, 1853.

MY DEAR FRANK, — I have, for a wonder, a leisure evening, and shall be glad to spend it in some of the plain talk to which you have invited me. If you were here, I should be tempted to laugh with you about your "very earnest desire that I should tell you exactly what I think of you, without fear of hurting your feelings." If you are really in the Slough of Despond, I desire not to imitate the politeness of the Frenchman, who couldn't pull a drowning man out of the water, because he "had never been introduced to the gentleman;" especially as I have not his excuse. But to use the privilege you give me of calling you hard names would be somewhat like La Fontaine's school-master, who detained one of his pupils in a mill-pond, while he lectured him on the wickedness of robbing the apple-tree from which he fell into it. Reproaches are not what you want, my son: when the Holy Spirit fulfils the merciful promise of our Saviour, and "convinces us of sin, because we believe not on him," — no human preacher need enforce the text. But while our awakened conscience passes under the rod of the Father's chastisement, it may be given to one who knows and loves us, to see a purpose in the discipline to which our eyes are blind. I wish I could do this for you.

I am glad, at any rate, to hear the whole story, though you were perfectly frank, as far as you went, when we talked together about it; and I like your unwillingness to involve Lucius. If an infidel has been your most intimate friend, I do not wonder at the strange mixture of truth and error which your case presents. Your confession came upon me at first like the news of what Edward has done. It was not so painful; nothing could be, I think. But, if possible, I was more surprised. I had a better right to trust your Christian faith than even his high sense of honor.

Yes; I know that "if you had been true to your Bible and to prayer, Lucius himself could not have so misled you." Still, I should not like to be in his place. Next to working the moral

ruin of one of Christ's "little ones," I should dread the thought of undermining his faith. The clear eyes of Jesus, looking into the future, see that "it were better" for one who does either, "that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Why we should forgive them, and how they may be punished, we might learn from his own prayer for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In that *Dies Irae* when all shall reap as they have sown, their harvest may be to look into the souls they have corrupted, and know what they have done. Just as I wrote the last word, my eye fell on this passage in Mr. Bartol's sermon, which Mary has left open for a moment on my table: "Only a very holy man can feel a holy indignation." Well: I will take the lesson sent to me. But I was going to wish your friend no worse fate in his German tour than what befell your uncle James in his, — an over-dose of rationalism to restore his soul's health. To tell the truth, I was not thinking so much of him as of your brother's — enemy. He certainly deserves no better name; God give us all "repentance and a better mind."

I called Lucius an infidel; though I suppose, strictly speaking, he is neither deist nor atheist. Perhaps it may be my old-fashioned prejudice; but I do think, — weighing the old-school infidelity against the new, it is a lighter evil. I once read a comparison between Fielding and Moore, in which the latter was justly condemned as the more dangerous writer, because the beauty and delicacy of his images hid so well the evil that lurked beneath; while the coarseness of Fielding's style furnished at once both bane and antidote. In religion, as in morals, many persons, who would hardly take poison alone, like it very much in the form of a sugar-plum.* Let a man tell you in plain English, that the Lord Jesus Christ was only a common man; let him repeat aloud what "the fool said in his heart, There is no God;" and your shocked reverence turns a deaf ear at once. But if he discourses in mystical language, — "an unknown tongue" to himself, and you, and everybody else, — of a subtle, impersonal essence, or a blind necessity, or a bundle of laws that made themselves, and work out their own fulfilment; or if he piles up

* The Prophet of Khorassan did not veil his countenance for the same reason that Moses did, when he came down from the mount of God.

a heterogeneous mass of vegetables, and animals, and human souls, to make a Pantheistic deity more monstrous than any hundred-headed idol of heathendom, — what then? Is any one of these the God of the Bible, the infinite Spirit who created all things in the beginning, the personal Friend and Judge of your soul and mind? Or if he draws for you the portrait of a Hebrew youth, who, by his rare intellectual gifts and rare purity of character, furnished a freer channel for “the everflowing divine effluence” to flow through, than even Socrates or Plato could be, — do you recognize in it “the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”? You call him a “martyr to his principles.” Where is the Saviour who died for you?

You remember the Austrian queen, who called upon her children once a week: I suppose you would rather have had your own mother, if she had been spared to you. I can imagine a Creator who should prefer never to be asked for any thing, nor thanked for any thing, nor loved for himself. Do you wish for such a God? Hear the voice of Jehovah: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.” What is written for ever on the cross? “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Yet the gradual unfolding of a magnificent cloud-scheme of the universe fascinates the soul’s gaze for awhile, till some awful crisis in its hidden life drives it for refuge to the Rock of Ages. So have I watched the gathering clouds of a summer tempest, and imagined them to be hosts of gods marshalling for battle, — Thor and Odin, Boreas and Jupiter, with their legions; till a stroke of lightning rent asunder the delusion, and the solemn voice of thunder called me into the presence of Him “who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.” It is very common now, and was in my young days, for the simple faith of childhood, that rested once in the arms of Jesus, to be sadly lost amid the so-called philosophies of youth. Scholars, fresh from school, have always had a perverse inclination for spending strength and hope, if not better treasures, exploring all kinds of wells in search of truth. Happy are they, when, sick

of mephitic vapors, and chilled with the damps of broken cisterns, they turn at last to the "well of living water" in whose pure depths she dwells. But how much better, how much better for themselves and for those who love them, if they had never wandered!

You seem to imply that Lucius had the same right to his belief, or rather his unbelief, that your uncle James has to differ from me. Are skepticism and sectarianism one and the same? Suppose my neighbor, Mr. Brown, sends his four boys some directions about hoeing the potato-patch that you consider such "a charming addition to the landscape." Three of them might understand his message in as many different ways, and act accordingly; but if the fourth will neither hear the messenger, nor join in the work, he takes a very different position, does he not? And if he fulfils the old adage, "The boy is father of the man," growing up into a freethinker, while one of his brothers is a Unitarian, and another a Quaker, and the third a Calvinist, — he does not stand where they do. With all their differences of faith, they are Christians, for the simple reason that they bow to the authority of Christ; if he does not, he may be a moral man, he might be, in one sense, even a religious man, — but he is not a Christian. Am I a disciple of Plato, because I have read some of his writings? The question is, Who is my soul's master? The answer decides my name.

So, with regard to the Bible, the question is not one of merit or comprehension, but of authority. A book which the Infinite Wisdom was thousands of years in writing, by so many different men, I should not expect you to fully understand, before you are twenty-one, nor perhaps if you were to outlive Methusaleh; for I never heard of any man who did. If you choose to follow in the wake of your illustrious predecessors, to the shipwreck of your faith, far enough to put the Holy Scriptures on a level with the works of Confucius, or the Koran, or the Book of Mormon, *as authority*, you have gone "to the length of your cable." Nobody was ever fool enough to deny its immeasurable superiority in all other respects. "How shall I get rid of doubts about the Bible?" you ask. Read the Bible. Read it as you did once, with a child's simple-hearted trust; join with that, as you did when you were older, a careful study and a reverent investigation; and the more you do, the more you will believe it. God will

help you to read his word, as he taught prophets and evangelists to write it — by his Holy Spirit.

I can hardly realize that it is my son Frank who writes to me, "What shall I do for doubts about prayer?" I answer, no, it is Christ who answers, — Pray! I cannot fear the result; we have prayed together too often; from the time when you said, "our Father" with your little hands in mine, till you could take the old man's place at the family altar, and lift all our hearts to God.

The assortment of reasons for not praying is rather limited, from the very nature of the case; and they seem to be small in strength as well as numbers. They desert a man, too, as I have seen more than once, where he most needs them; when there is "but a plank between him and eternity," on a raging sea; or at his wife's death-bed; or in the thick darkness that may be felt in the soul when God hides the light of his countenance. Therefore I do not wonder so much at your selecting one which does little credit to your natural taste for logic. You "cannot hope, by any words of yours, to change the mind of an unchangeable Being." If you could perform the impossibility, I think you would hardly wish to change it on this point: you would have more mercy on yourself and on the world. Eighteen hundred years ago, to say nothing of any promise before or since, the God of all truth expressed his "mind" in these words: "Ask, and it shall be given you." If any one chooses to insert a negative in either part of this very plain statement, and read, "Ask not, and it shall be given you; or ask, and it shall not be given you," he does it on his own responsibility. What shall be given you? The very thing you ask for? Certainly not, if the Giver is a wise Father, unless he thinks best. When shall it be given? In his own good time, or in his eternity. Looking back on a long life, I see that he has bestowed on me countless mercies and special favors, for which I could never have thought to pray, and taken away some treasures too dear for me to offer in exchange for the true riches; but how many others can I trace directly to some time of asking? And were they not all gathered up in the petition, Thy will be done? Let me ask you if God is the only one of your friends, whose love is not dearer to you than any gifts which can express it? Is it no privilege to be allowed to speak while he listens? — knowing, as you do, that he hears not only

the words of your lips, but those deeper voices of your soul that no human speech can utter.

I suppose I have thought the more of your feelings, Frank, because you say so little about them. Whether it is my natural hardness of heart, or "the English blood in my veins," that you joke about, I know not; but real persons or people in books, who are "bathed in tears," to use an expression of one of your favorite authors, get precious little sympathy from me. I agree with you; I hate sentimentalism. There are exceptions to every rule, I know; but I always find it hard to believe that there is real, deep feeling under a multitude of words about it. I have known you so long and so well, that I need no one to tell me how painful the spiritual states you describe must be to you. But could you reasonably expect to come into the kingdom of heaven, except through some "tribulation"? Not unless a miracle were wrought for you. Suppose you were living in your own father's house, and did not speak to him for the length of time you told me you had neglected prayer; or had paid as little attention to his words as you have lately to your Bible. Why, Frank, if you were easy and happy in your present relations to your heavenly Father, I should be far more sorry for you than I can be now. There is the natural relation of cause and effect. You cannot divorce what God has married together. Right feeling can no more live without a true faith, than the heart of Sisera could beat, after the Kenite woman's tent-nail had pierced his temples. The Judge of all our hearts punishes some transgressions by outward evils, — a slow disease or a sudden calamity, secret losses or open disgrace. But "the sin of unbelief" is oftener followed by that mental suffering which only he who sends it can fully understand. Apart from Christ, the conscience becomes a jealous tyrant, rather than a watchful friend; the "soul's looking-glass" of self-examination presents a distorted image; the natural and holy thirst for perfection is a torture never to be appeased. If the Saviour does not "abide with us," and our "house is empty, swept, and garnished," it is a mercy if no "unclean spirit" enters. We cannot expect him to leave his peace in the heart which has rejected his presence.

As I am a doctor, I suppose I may notice in this connection what you speak of accidentally. I congratulate you upon discovering the virtues of early rising, and cold water, and fresh

breezes, *et cetera*. Perhaps you may have read somewhere, that the mind and body are closely related. Our Great Physician never forgot it.

And now that you see these doubts as they are, and sincerely desire to shake them off, it must seem very hard that they still cling to you; that God does not reach forth his hand to set you free. Let us rather thank him, that, under the rank growth of skepticism, which this baptism of fire will surely destroy, he has kept alive for you the firm roots of your early faith. If they sprang up in a night, like Jonah's gourd, they also might wither in a night, tempting you to the prophet's despair. Christ must "thoroughly purge his floor."

I believe the only serious misunderstanding which ever occurred between you and me was at the time your father's estate was settled — years ago; but I am sure you will remember it. Now, I might have explained the matter to you, or any intelligent boy of your age, in half an hour; and I actually longed to do so. But I knew it would be wrong. Upon my decision, at that time, hung the interests of years of guardianship. I could not keep coming to you, and telling you "the how, and the why, and the wherefore" of all I did for you. If the relations in which your father left us were to continue, I must have your confidence. I must have it; I must wait for it till it come. And I shall never forget, that, when you told me frankly and humbly, how you felt about your conduct, you thanked me especially that I did not show you the papers in the case, and wished not to see them till your actions had proved your words.

Does not God allow us to look at every human affection as a type even of his own? He has cared for you, and will care for you through all eternity. Yet, even in this world, you may see cause to thank him for keeping you in the dark, till your faith laid fast hold on him. What says your favorite parable? It was a father's love that met the returning son a great way off, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. It was no less a father's love which waited for that son to travel a greater way alone. Only the Father, who sees all our hearts, can tell where that point of meeting lies. Towards it, we must walk cheerfully, knowing that his heart is with us, if we cannot see his face; willing, in our humility, to be servants in his household, till, in his own good time, he spreads the feast of welcome for us and

exalts us to be sons. If He would only restore your brother to us! Sometimes, hoping against hope, I think his not writing is a sign that he means to come home; and I know that nothing would ever make him do that, unless he were truly penitent.

Remember it was by no accident that Christian's burden fell from his shoulders, at the foot of the cross: Jesus waits to meet you there, with the love that cross has sealed. And the God of all grace shall give you an abundant entrance into the kingdom of his Son. Good night, my child! All send love to you.

Your affectionate Guardian.

Your aunt Mary, real woman-fashion, as I tell her, has made me unseal my letter this morning just at mail-time, to tell you that she will send your ———.

Edward has come! You will join us as soon as possible, I know. God be praised! He has answered my prayers when prayer itself seemed hopeless!

H. S. T.

HOMAGE TO CHRIST.

A SERMON, BY REV. G. W. BRIGGS.

MATT. II. 1, 2: "There came wise men from the east, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star, and are come to worship him."

AND the fact proved that he was not only the King of the Jews, but the King of men. The wisest came, as if to express the allegiance of humanity itself in its noblest form, before a single Jew recognized his king. Probably the wise men were some of those students in the East, of whom traditions remain, who devoted themselves to speculations upon the great questions of philosophy and life. In that night of the world, they watched every new star which might shed another ray of light upon their darkened thought. And therefore they brought "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," the choice gifts of the world, to express a sense of the priceless worth of the choicest gift of Heaven.

Is it an insignificant fact, that each of the two evangelists who speak of the birth of Jesus, has recorded the homage of a different class of men at the manger? Matthew, the unlearned publican,

speaks of the adoration of the wise men. Luke, the scholar, speaks of the adoration of the shepherds. It was natural that each should weave into the story of miracle the fact that Jesus received the reverence of minds so unlike his own. If shepherds worshipped where wise men adored, and wise men brought their gifts where publicans prayed, then the Sovereign of a Universal Empire had really come. It was a beautiful symbol to bring the extremes of humanity together at the Redeemer's cradle, as if to prophesy the grand result that they should be brought for ever together at last by his life.

I simply notice these symbols of the universal sway of Jesus. I leave that broader theme in order to consider the fact that the wise men came with offerings of homage.

An impression lingers in the world, that Christianity is especially necessary for the weakness of humanity rather than for its strength; for the shepherds rather than the wise. It is a crutch for feeble souls; it is an indispensable restraint for undeveloped natures; it is a comforter for the broken heart. Intellect often refuses to follow the example of the wise men at the manger. It condescends to uphold Christianity as a restraint upon society, rather than because it adores. Much of the scepticism of the present day is produced or nourished by the same sentiment. It does not reject Christianity, but deems it incomplete, and desires to look beyond it. It does not war upon Jesus; but it has grown large enough by his ministry to aspire to something greater still. It has words of reverence for him; but its effect is to place a broken sceptre in his hand, and to deny his sovereignty while it seems to worship.

The wise men adored at the manger: it was not an isolated fact, but an indication of a universal law. When did Christianity appear? Not in the childhood of the world! Empires, civilizations, had risen, and flourished, and perished. Philosophers had speculated for ages. Plato had discoursed long before. The spirit of wisdom and of beauty had already bestowed upon Greece their gift of immortality. The accumulated influences of forty centuries had stimulated human thought. And then, in the manhood of the race, when human wisdom had done its work, the preparation was just completed for the nobler ministry of heaven. Then was man first wise enough to understand and to adore.

The order of history is exactly analogous to man's spiritual experience. It is with the mind of the individual as with the mind of the race. What minds will most intently seek to solve the problems of existence? Look at them as a glance at life reveals them. We look back a little from the present moment, and an impenetrable mystery covers our being. We look forward a little, and it will enter another, now impenetrable mystery. If there has been a pre-existent state, as philosophers have sometimes fancied, no gleams of light have followed us here to reveal its nature. If there is a future, higher world, the splendor of that excellent glory is not clearly shining round us now. The incidents of our voyage are always changing. Now the sun sparkles upon the waters, and now the storm clothes the waves in terror; now there is the gladness of youth and hope and love, and now the wail of the broken heart. But still we all seem to come up out of the sea, and sail on for a while, and then sink beneath the waters. Who will ponder the problems of such an existence? Is it the man who slumbers in ignorance and the stupidity of sense? or is it the man in whom thought is awake to realize the glory of the mind, whose researches have brought him to the threshold of this magnificent temple of God, this house of innumerable mansions, and who longs to gather its now hidden treasures to enrich this wondrous soul? Who will ponder these questions? Will it be those in whom the most beautiful elements of being are undeveloped yet? or will it be those in whom sensibility is all alive, and affection has opened its unfathomable depths, who feel as if their own souls had almost perished when kindred souls have vanished? Will the unwise or the wise be most disposed to hail the star which casts a new light upon their mysterious way? It is in the writings of ancient philosophers that anxious speculations are found concerning the truths which Christianity declares. The wise men came to the feet of Jesus.

It was a declaration of scepticism in ancient time, that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Knowledge would be torture, if no reply should come to the questions which it suggests. The slumbering mind cares no more for its condition than crushed manhood cares for its chains. I scarcely wish to know the value of my being, if I can have no assurance of its destiny. Do not kindle the flame of thought, if it must be quenched in ever-

lasting night. Let these nerves of feeling be palsied, if their sensibility is to increase the agony of that fear. Let me not see the glory of this portal of existence, which demands eternity to complete its proportions, if it is to be viewed as a vestibule opening only to the sepulchre. Life would be torment, if it consisted of intense mental development, sensibilities, affections in all their strength, wakened souls, with no spiritual light. I should desire the darkness of ignorance, if there were no heavenly star to shine upon my way. If any man can live without the light of religious teaching, it is he who is dead to all that is noblest in his nature. It is not he who is truly wise. Such a soul will press on to the utmost verge of human knowledge, and there it will stand as the Magi stood, to watch the first coming of a brighter star. It hears the words of human wisdom; and then, with unsatisfied ear, it listens, if perchance it may catch the sound of a heavenly voice. Religion is not the special gift for the ignorant. It is not a crutch for the crippled mind. It is the answer to the irresistible questions of awakened thought. It meets the strongest minds at the utmost point to which they can attain, and bears them up upon its angel-wing to a world of diviner sight. It is a special solace to any, it is to the most developed souls; a ministry, without which their unanswered questions would be as a fire that is not quenched. Let the wise men come for ever, as they came at first, in lowly worship.

It is interesting to see how human nature will reveal its deepest necessities in the experience of life. How often have great men, whom a nation or a world has honored, — those who have borne a crown upon their brow, returned to the altars of faith in declining years! The fact has given occasion to a frequent sneer. But it has a glorious and an awful meaning. It is indeed a poor homage, when the strength of life has been wasted by sin, to bring its decay as an offering; when passion has burned itself out in selfishness or lust, to strew the ashes of existence upon the altars; when the hands have clutched the prizes of ambition until their grasp fails, tremblingly to lay hold of the rope of Christ. It is a poor homage to bring the wreck of being, when its utmost majesty is all too mean to be accepted, except in an infinite compassion. Still I never read of the Prodigal, or see a realization of his history, where the heart has tried mirth and passion, following the dread experiment with desperate feet, and then has come back at the same moment to

itself and its God, without wondering at the awful power in the depths of human nature. We do not always recognize the connection; but a conscience is there which is bound by an inseparable chain to the throne of God. And one day a fire from heaven shall blaze along its links, and kindle a burning conviction of the soul's undying wants, which shall upheave its utmost depths, as the earthquake heaves the mountains. I never hear of the coming of a great intellect to the altars of faith in declining years, without feeling that knowledge cannot smother or satisfy the cry of the spiritual nature. The prodigals in the world of mind, like the prodigals in the world of sense, when they come to themselves, return to the Father. Sometimes we see such returns even here. Sometimes it needs the new light of eternity to bring men to themselves. But the want is there. Knowledge shall only reveal the spiritual necessity in greater clearness at last; and, on one side of the veil or the other, those whom men call wise shall come, or mourn that they did not come, in adoration to the feet of Jesus.

The developed mind especially needs the ministry of Jesus. So, too, does a developed society. Some men think that Christianity is less a necessity in a high civilization, than in a comparatively barbarous state; that the nameless and numberless refinements of general cultivation bridle or eradicate the worst propensities of human nature; and that, amidst circumstances so favorable to the highest forms of human character, something of the sharpness of restraint may be relaxed. Such a theory betrays the want of Christian discrimination. An imperfect morality might deal with a society whose vices were palpable and gross, like the sensualities and butcheries of savage men. It does not require a keen eye to detect what is all unveiled. It does not require a nice ear to distinguish the shrieks and yells of passion. If possible, Christianity is more indispensable to the man of highest refinement, than to the scouted sinner. Sin chooses refined manifestations in cultivated ages. It lurks in insidious principles, in impure motives, in the thousand perversities of corrupted feeling. It lurks in literature, and poisons mind and heart, while it captivates by its brilliant dress. It makes sensualities attractive to the taste. It conceals its revolting form beneath the courtesies and grace of manners. It may wear a robe of beauty, while at heart it is black as night. It may deceive all but those whose eyes have been touched by the finger of Christ. I know of

nothing, except Christianity, that can penetrate and tear away these disguises. It looks upon literature with pure eye, and detects the deceptive poison. It touches the disguised demon with its angel-spear, and his deformity stands revealed. It erects the judgment-seat of Christ in the midst of life, before which every secret thing shall be brought to light. It penetrates into the domain of motives, into the birth-place of principles and feelings, and demands a purity which is stainless to the eye of God. When vice lays aside the grossness of barbarism, what do we need but a ministry that forbids the licentious look as it forbids the licentious act; which thunders the same judgments against the thoughts of crime that were once uttered against atrocious deeds? When sin becomes spiritual, we need the more a spiritual king. You tell me of the heathen in their blindness, of disgusting superstitions, and inhuman sacrifices, in regions where nature almost wears the beauty of heaven, and only man is vile. And the church cries, "Send the missionary of Jesus to such benighted lands, that man may be made glorious as nature is fair." Send him there in the name of Christ. Obey the last words that came down to the ear of the apostles, as Jesus ascended into heaven; and preach the gospel to every creature, —

"Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name."

Still, when I see what unchristian feelings lurk beneath the forms of civilization, and what unchristian competitions help to build up its glory; when I see what shrines it raises to power and wealth, and what hosts of worshippers are there who "rest not day nor night" in their devotions, — shrines which it may be as difficult to purify as to cleanse the heathen temples, and cast down all their gods; when I see how civilization itself may trample upon truth and justice, I say, here, in the blaze of the world's light, let us see the brightness of the Redeemer's star. Here, where Christianity has already done so much, let it put forth its power to cope with its most insidious foes. Here let the strength of intellect expound the majestic authority and meaning of the law of Christ. When I think of spiritual necessities, the advanced realms of civilization, equally with the world's darkest places, stretch out their hands to God. The wise men come to the Redeemer's cradle.

It is easy to open other trains of thought in harmony with these reflections. It would not be difficult to show how the progress of knowledge has aided to establish the foundations of faith. Science has often made discoveries that seemed at first to conflict with religious truths. But a higher science, step by step, finds out the secret of their reconciliation. Geology appeared for a time to place the book of Nature against the book of Revelation. But more instructed eyes detect a new principle of interpretation, and gradually discover the same truth upon the pages of both. And if there are apparent contradictions, yet unsolved, between Science and Faith, they will disappear, in a higher progress, like those already gone. Some theories about religious truths, the scaffolding around the temple itself, may be swept away. But it will only reveal that building of God in its perfect beauty. Philosophy has penetrated into the realms of thought in its search for wisdom. But often has its brightest acquisition been surpassed by a single ray from the Redeemer's star. Men are now unsealing the sepulchres of ancient kings, and restoring the monuments of buried cities. And, in such discoveries, it seems as if messengers rose from the dead to bring their confirmations of the religious history of the world. What treasure-houses of instruction are just opening their wealth to human thought! All science and all nature shall yet do homage to the truth of Jesus, as earth and heaven were moved to homage at his birth and at his crucifixion. The truly wise shall still come to worship.

It would be easy to look into the nature of religious truths themselves, into the principles of Christian morality, and the doctrines of Christian faith, to show how they accommodate themselves to every grade of thought. They speak to the lowliest natures, yet they still reserve higher meanings for larger minds, as they become capable of apprehending them. The word Father presents a conception of God which the humblest mind can grasp. Yet it rises far beyond the reach of man's divinest thought. The mind will feel an equal inability to grasp that sublime conception, to whatever height it may ascend; and the angel will adore more reverentially than the child. "Do unto others as you wish that others should do unto you" is equally a law for infancy, for manhood, and for the heavenly hosts. The enlargement of the conception of human or angelic duty will not demand a modification of that statute. The same principle will apply,

whatever may be the spirit's power. It was fit that the stars should do reverence at the birth of him who clearly expounded that moral law. For the law will be more enduring than the stars, and will reign over intelligent natures, in their inconceivable glory, after the heavens shall wax old like a garment.

Indeed it is the glory of Christianity that it, at the same moment, stimulates and satisfies the highest thought. It comes to the world with a revelation of principles which every man is called to develop, in numberless applications to life and feeling, by individual and patient thought. The great schools of human science can be open only to the few. But here is a field of noblest thought, in which humanity itself is called to exercise its powers. Here is a diviner school, which opens wide its doors to every son and daughter of the race. Could Christianity be once intelligently served, it would seem to touch every faculty of the soul with an electric fire. And then, when the mind of man should once plume its wings to rise into this realm of diviner truth, what wisdom for the single heart, and for the world, in its social arrangements, in its public policies, in its business and its legislation too, would break upon its astonished and enraptured view! In that upper world which shines upon the eye of faith, we suppose that the mind will assume a now inconceivable power, while love is breathing in the very life of God. And as Christianity puts forth its divinest life, and leads the world towards that purity of heaven, it will bring new inspiration to human thought, as well as impart the beauty of holiness.

But I have only desired to suggest these considerations. I have chosen rather to dwell upon the fact, that the development of mind, in the individual and in society, brings pressing questions, refined spiritual dangers, that Christianity alone can meet; questions, dangers, that make its ministry more indispensable at every step of progress. In ruder ages, the world went on with a moral teaching that was less complete. But when men become wise, in the manhood of the race, they go to Bethlehem to worship.

I have no sympathy with the thought that regards Christianity as a peculiar ministry for feeble natures. The course of life does not bear me towards such conclusions. Every development of feeling, every profound experience, leads me to a different faith. The more profound my consciousness of the spirit's need, the

more I perceive the fulness of the promise, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." To me Christianity seems more truly infinite in each new unfolding of its spirit, as the universe seems more unlimited, as man, with mightier telescopes, pierces into the boundless realms of space. The name of Jesus wakens associations which are always increasing in number and in power. From his cradle and from his cross, — from Bethany and from Gethsemane, — from his benediction upon the child, and from his benediction upon the penitent — from the tomb of Lazarus, and from his own deserted sepulchre, from every radiant point in his history, an increasing glory seems to come. The most profound words of reverence which have echoed down through the church from past ages appear as a fitting expression of the sentiment of the soul. When I surrender the heart to its growing convictions of the need and power of this ministry of Jesus, then I find a charm in the words — Brother, Friend, Comforter, Saviour, and every blessed name which discipleship has given to its Lord. It would be well for the Christian church if believers could stop their controversies, and bathe their souls in the light which flows from the spirit of Jesus himself, until it had filled mind and heart. Then let them compare their natural expressions of reverence. Let them see, when their souls are all attuned to praise, in what strains they will celebrate the Redeemer's name. Meantime, it seems to me that, as man advances, the song will be more exalted. The necessity for his ministry will be more deeply felt, and its scope will be seen to be more grand. True knowledge, true civilization, will be more reverential every day. Meantime, I am sure, that amid the changes and decays of years, man must cling more steadfastly to that unchanging, undecaying truth. May all who believe have wisdom so to yield their homage at the manger and the cross, that they shall win the life which they adore!

TRIALS OF THE CHURCH.

LET us remember, in the first place, that, while our own manhood and our own salvation require of us to be consistent members in the church, the church does not stand in need of, nor depend on, our countenance. Its energy is supernatural. It lives by the breath of God's inspiration. Christ is its indwelling Light, Life, and Head. It may fluctuate as to its outward fortunes, according as men rally to it, or neglect it; but it never perishes, and never can. The church is only embodied Christianity, — or Christianity vitally moving and breathing as an organized institution among men. But Christianity was no more indebted to human hospitality after it "mounted the throne of the Cæsars, or shed its august benediction over kneeling multitudes in the basilicos of Constantinople," than when it lodged among fishermen and tent-makers. It exists among men to satisfy their wants, and feed their hunger; not to be apologized for by their ingenuity, nor to be defended by their prowess. Men that can so read history as to explain a phenomenon like the Christian church by the enthusiasm of a few discontented Hebrews, are as bad philosophers as they are disciples. Accidents do not create the imposing institutions that sway the destinies and fate of nations and centuries. What we have to do with the church is, not to criticize its claims, nor to patronize its honor; but to hasten to shelter ourselves under its blessed protection, and seek to reform, first our own hearts, and then the community, through its ministry. Every effective reform must be prosecuted with its energy; and the only hope for humanity is in its correcting power, beseeching men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.

All branches of the church have yet to be tried, probably, as by fire. Like the individual soul, they must be made perfect only through suffering; and they must be made one, only by being made to feel how weak they are disintegrated and alone. It may be that nothing would do so much to lift us out of our theological bickerings and sectarian alienations, reconciling us at once to each other and to God, as a new age of persecution from without. Under sharp blows from abroad, the sects would have no time for hostile incursions upon one another; faith would wax

intense as it grew resolute; chaff would be sifted from wheat; and the erring or careless squadrons of God's host would rally for a common defence. However this may be, the divine mercy that spares us the agony ought not to be turned into an opportunity for indifference or domestic strife. And trials of a different kind we are certainly appointed to, capable of yielding us instruction. For we are living in times when there must be many days of darkness, — many blind struggles for the light, many suspicions, misunderstandings, and mutual accusations between brethren. This is because human nature is not yet thoroughly renovated. Men, even religious men, are not raised above the love of self and of party into the all-controlling desire that the world should be reconciled to God. Provided this could be done without disturbing their selfish or partisan schemes, they would rejoice; not otherwise. And so the Spirit is grieved by unworthy profession on one side, and the reaction of unbelief on the other. Philosophical skepticism may set in upon us, through a half-completed study of the sciences, in this century, as it did in the last through a revolutionary reaction from political and ecclesiastical despotism. Atheism may flourish on unworthy examples of Christian profession, — and pantheism on the pride of intellect, — and naturalism on prayerless studies, — and despair on profane lives. As Jouffroy says of the French ministers: "We may have, for a time, no noble and full *yea* to match our shrill and bold *nay*." Let none of these things disturb us, if only out of them all God's kingdom is to come at last. To serve is nobler than to enjoy. Labor is diviner than rest. Providence has not ordained us to a period of repose. But it ought to be enough that he has called us to work and wait, under the encouragement that faith will crown the toil of ages at last, and has scattered here and there a sign of the coming noon. Who does not long sometimes to feel the arms of an undivided church folded about him? to labor for Christ within a fair and firm and all-encircling order, — one faithful family? So much the more we all ought to feel cheered, whenever a beam of day shoots up the sky.

One other great practical obligation we ought certainly not to pass over. Society, in its inequalities and injustices, is constantly presenting the necessity of great reforms. Private sins, or sins of individuals, flow together, and get organized into gigantic shapes of evil, — intemperance, war, licentiousness, slavery. Of

course, to resist and overcome these collective sins, a collective power of virtue is wanted. That is a church. Believing and faithful men must combine. That is a Christian church. Now, what a public shame and public treachery it is, if the church ever proves itself faithless to this sublime privilege; if it leaves the great moral and social reformatory to well-disposed men standing outside of the church, and so lends countenance to the unbeliever's charge, that the earnest moral life of mankind is not within the fold of Christ; because other and newer institutions have taken its work out of its hands! The unbeliever is wrong; because, if he would only stay inside the church, or come into it, and enlist his noble energies under the standard of the cross, he would do the same work with tenfold greater success, working according to God's chosen way. Put your zeal, then, into the church. Come into it, reformer, yourself. Revive its ancient, primitive, martyr-spirit. Rekindle its sublime courage. Honor it by an upright example. Warm it with your prayers. Sustain it by your loyalty. Expand it by your charity. Cast into it all of spiritual strength and hope you have, and you shall both save yourself, and be a living and shining light, for the Truth's sake, for Liberty's sake, for the spread of Love, Hope, Faith. H.

THE FATHER'S HAND.

WHEN my life-bark, richly freighted,
 In the light of morning lay,
 Came my Father's hand so gently,
 And its treasure bore away.

Beggared by the sore affliction,
 Eagerly my heart pursued,
 As, 'mid clouds his face concealing,
 The receding Hand I viewed.

Wings of faith its flight supporting,
 Lo! it cleaves the upper sky;—
 There my heart its treasure greeting,
 Both within his Hand shall lie.

H. S. T.

“THE COCK CREW.”

EVERY-DAY occurrences offer to us valuable lessons, if we only listen to their teachings; and it is a curious study to notice the different effects which natural phenomena exert upon different minds.

Thus the rising and setting sun, that calls forth and shuts in the day, to the deeply religious soul speaks of majesty and love, of mercy, omniscience, and omnipotence, of infancy and old age, of this and the better life, of a wonderful economy for warming worlds and lighting the earth, of a Being infinite and almighty. To the careless man, the reappearance of day is nothing but an often-repeated fact, the meaning of which he is too indolent to solve: as long as it is convenient and comfortable to himself, he is satisfied.

Notice also the stars that dot the firmament: to the child they are as diamonds in the sky; to the religious youth their brilliancy is a reflection of the Father of light; to the religious old man they serve as way-marks, guiding him to God.

Religion gives a meaning to all things; adds a glory and lustre to what might, when viewed in another light, be estimated of no account. In truth, nature is not known to man until it is lighted up by a religious gaze. We become absorbed in the study of the planetary system, when we acknowledge through all its intricacies the handiwork and might of an all-wise and an all-holy God. The earth, teeming with luxuriance, is loaded also with blessings to man, when he traces in the fruitful fields, the beautiful gardens, the splendid lakes, and the solemn oceans, the lines of a loving Providence and a guiding Father. Ah! we know not the riches of life; we know not how hemmed in we are, and how thoroughly engirt we have been by the mercies of God; we know not how reckless we are, and how we wantonly sport, by our ingratitude, with the goodness of our heavenly Father; we know not any of these things until the *cock crows*; then, through the load of our guilt, and the awful consciousness of our deficiencies, we weep bitterly, and our eyes are opened, and we see that we have denied the Lord, even in his very presence.

Such is the case with those who, with Peter, promise eternal allegiance. How is it with the thoroughly indifferent man?

To the indifferent man, the blazing fires in the heavens, dazzling by their wondrous shapes and sizes, afford nothing suggestive. To such an one all the forces of creation are blanks. Such a stupor casts its gloom upon the mind, and paralyzes the soul, that the outward glories cannot cast their beams so as to transfuse and transform the whole inner life. The cock crows, but the indifferent man does not interpret rightly the sound. It is meant for repentance, heart-felt remorse, heavenly aspiration: he understands it not, or that same look of the Saviour might rouse his senses, and cause him to *weep bitterly*.

The mystery of life is a problem which the religiously curious delight to consider; and, although conscious that it can never be solved by the grasp of human intellect, it is a pleasure to them to invent theories concerning its solution; they love to represent life as a "trust, responsibility, achievement." They show on the one side its trials, and on the other its blessings; the results of these are carefully estimated, and even life's darkest phases are found to evolve great good. Thus, by such men, life is made a reality; it is fashioned by good resolutions, and shaped by earnest faith. How is it with the person who never thought what it was to live?

The cock crows; life, with its lessons of wisdom, counsel, and strength, goes on; he is a stranger to the sound. The fact that he breathes is all that he understands; why he is placed here, where he is going, is an enigma which he does not care to clear up; he is satisfied if nature supplies his physical wants; and like a beast he lives, and beast-like dies. Sad the picture; but does it not present, in daguerreotype, some reader of these lines? Let us search our hearts, and thoroughly purge ourselves.

When the shepherds, watching their flocks by night, were all suddenly started by the shouts of angels in the heavens overarching them, and dazzled by the star in the East, which was for ever to be a pole-star to man, — when these voices thrilled their souls, and this wondrous star enchained their attention, — then "the cock crew." The sound was for the Jewish nation; it was a signal for repentance; the Lord had been denied; on all sides, religion had lost its sanctity; form had crowded out reality; the ritual usurped the spiritual, the letter quenched the spirit; and

the temple was constantly profaned. "*The cock crew.*" There was need of some such signal, and God never forsakes man or nations in times of need. The *cock crew*, and thereby the Old Testament became a fact; prophecies no longer were accounted vague dreams; and the whole Jewish longings were proved to be the yearnings of intense need, by the fact of their being satisfied. The cock crew. A Saviour was born, and Israel was redeemed. That sound reaches even to us, and will reach to our remotest posterity, stretching through time and space, that the whole world, without exception, may wake to righteousness.

These words, "*The cock crew,*" are a portion of an interesting description of St. Peter's temptation and fall, — interesting from the fact that it portrays our own weakness so clearly. Peter had promised peculiar service and loyalty to Christ: "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." He undoubtedly meant to perform all that he promised, but he knew not himself. At the moment of this assertion, he felt sufficiently strong; at the moment of trial, he felt abundantly weak. His master looked deeply into the heart, and saw a lack of strength and true fortitude there. "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." The cock crew, and Peter remembered the words of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly. Does not this account shadow forth our experience? Do not we, in moments of religious enthusiasm, vow constant and never-dying service; and, when put to the test, do not we, like Simon, fall; and are not we forced, by the pressure of our feelings, to go aside and weep bitterly? What hopes have we of forgiveness when we break our vows to the Almighty?

Let us see how it was with Peter. The next time that he meets the Saviour is after the resurrection, upon the sea-shore, where Christ says to him, "Lovest thou me?" This question he repeats thrice; for three times did Peter deny him. In this mild way is rebuke given; and, as Jesus sees the repentance of Simon, he says, "Feed my lambs. I forgive you; go now to your work; feed my lambs."

Forgiveness is based upon contrition. The New Testament enforces this truth through all its doctrines and histories; it flashes in every chapter, verse, and line, and gives cheer to the sick in heart and the sinful in soul, who repair, with sorrow for error, to the fountain of true life, even the Saviour of the world.

The *cock crows*. It is to urge us to repentance; it is to stir us up to a new life; it is to fill us with scripture-truths, that our minds and souls may ever be open to the realities of nature, and ever draw from the outer world strength for the inner man. It is to announce that every change in life means something, and will affect, for evil or good, our characters.

Oftentimes the *cock crows*, and we miss a dear one from our side; it is a message of warning, interlined with love and mercy; and, while we weep, let us have faith in Christ, and mourn not as those without hope. Let us remember that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. The cock will crow also at a time when we shall be the victims: let not this thought strike us with despair, and cast too heavy shades upon our souls; but let it nerve us to duty; let it kindle our faith and inspire our zeal, that we may be found, when the call comes, with our harness on. With our harness on, like the great man who expired near the sea-shore, and who, when the cock crew, wrapped peacefully the drapery of his couch around him, and laid down to pleasant dreams; whilst the nation, hearing the sound, and understanding its meaning, gathered together in crowds and wept. The Lord turns and looks upon us when great men depart, and bids us to prepare, for our day is at hand. Dr. Blair has beautifully said, "As long as it shall please God to continue our abode in the world, let us remain faithful to our duty; and when it shall please him to give the command for our removal hence, let us utter only this voice, —

"In thy hand, O my God! my times are. Thou art calling me away. Here I am, ready to obey thy call, and at thy signal to go forth. I thank thee that I have been admitted to partake so long of the comforts of life, and to be a spectator of the wisdom and goodness displayed in thy works. I thank thee that thou hast borne so long with my infirmities and provocations; hast allowed me to look up to thy promises in the gospel, and to hear the words of eternal life uttered by my great Redeemer. With gratitude, faith, and hope, I commit my soul to thee. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Let these words that I have just quoted from the good preacher of the English school, who tips his own thoughts with a scriptural exclamation, be our words when the cock crows.

Every Sunday the cock crows; by prayers, by hymns, by sermons, by recollections of the past and hopes for the future, by fresh consecration to, and earnest inquiry after, truth. May our fervent prayer be, "Heavenly Father, give us power to comprehend these warnings, so regular, and to be ever on the watch for their inspiration or reproof!" May we remember that all gifts of the Holy Spirit come by asking; then, by praying constantly, when the cock crows we shall understand its call, and view it as a message from Almighty God. Then will angels descend and ascend to and from the Father to advise us of our duty, and to prepare us for heaven.

"The *cock crows*," and God is omnipresent, and with the touching lines of the poet we conclude: —

"There is an unseen Power around,
Existing in the silent air:
Where treadeth man, where space is found,
Unheard, unknown, that Power is there.

And not when bright and busy day
Is round us with its crowds and cares;
And not when night, with solemn sway,
Bids awe-hushed souls breathe forth in prayers;

Not when, on sickness' weary couch,
He writhes with pain's deep, long-drawn groan;
Not when his steps in freedom touch
The fresh, green turf, — is man *alone*.

In proud Belshazzar's gilded hall,
'Mid music, lights, and revelry,
That present Spirit looked on all,
From crouching slave to royalty.

When sinks the pious Christian's soul,
And scenes of horror daunt his eye,
He hears it whispered through the air,
"A tower of mercy still is nigh."

The Power that watches, guides, defends,
Till man becomes a lifeless sod,
Till earth is nought, — nought earthly friends, —
That omnipresent Power — is God."

C. D. E.

BERKELEY.

THE artist calls the marble into life,
 Or spreads the glowing landscape from his brush,
 Not to enlarge the boundaries of sense,
 But to convey a thought h the heart.
 Nor have the woods and fields and waterbrooks
 A lowlier purpose in Creation's plan.
 If man's rude imitations have this power,
 Much more the perfect workmanship of God.
 In each event, each season, and each thing,
 He breathes an all-persuading eloquence,
 Winning the hearts of men, and giving all
 Some share in wisdom's rich inheritance.

In every part of Nature, great or small,
 God's attributes, of wisdom, power, and love,
 Are shown; which bid his children grow each day
 In knowledge, diligence, and charity.

In every tone of Nature, — when in spring,
 The gentle south wind, bathing every sense
 In a delicious transport, brings each sound
 With unaccustomed clearness to the ear, —
 Or in the varied song of birds, when June,
 Radiant with light and perfumed with the flowers,
 Makes all the beauty of the spring forgot, —
 Or when, in sultry August, deep-dyed clouds
 Announce the rising gust, and thunders deep
 Wake all the solemn harmonies of heaven;
 In every tone of Nature, — thundered, sighed,
 Or flowing in a stream of melody, — one voice
 Is ever uttered; — 'tis the voice of God.

In every field, the glory of the Lord
 Appears; to eyes devout as visible
 As once on Judah's plains; when, in the night,
 The darkness melted, 'neath the herald dawn
 Which to the shepherd-swains foretold the rise
 Of David's Son, the Sun of Righteousness.

Why, then, shall Allston's magic light and shade,
 Or why Beethoven's chords, with deeper power,
 Awake a holier glow within my heart,
 Than that which springs in every daily sight,
 And every daily sound? For every sight
 Is truly picture, drawn with infinite skill,
 Shaded and colored with a matchless grace;
 And every sound is to the ear
 That finds its sure relation to the key
 Of Nature's universal harmony.

H. T.

 WORDS OF A BELIEVER.

TRANSLATED FROM L'ABBE DE LA MENNAIS.

GLORY to God in the heights of heaven, and peace upon earth to men of good-will.

Let him who has ears, hear; let him who has eyes, open them, and behold, for the time draweth nigh.

Something that we know not of is stirring in the world; it is one of the works of God.

Is there one who is not waiting? Is there a heart that doth not beat?

THE PAST.

And I was carried in spirit into the times of old, and the earth was beautiful and rich and fruitful; and the inhabitants thereof lived in happiness, for they lived as brethren.

And I saw the serpent creeping in the midst of them; upon many he fixed his potent glare, and their souls were troubled within them, and they drew near, and the serpent spoke in their ear.

And when they had listened to the voice of the serpent, they arose and said, We are kings.

And the sun was darkened, and the earth took a funereal tinge, like that of the shroud that wraps the dead.

And a hoarse murmur arose, a long wail, and each trembled in his heart.

And Fear spread from hut to hut, — for palaces were not yet in those days, — and whispered secretly to each words that made them shudder.

And those who had said, We are kings, took a sword, and followed Fear from hut to hut.

And great mysteries came to pass there : there were there chains, and tears, and blood.

And man, being in terror, exclaimed, Murder has re-appeared in the world ! And this was all ; for Fear had numbed their soul, and taken strength from their arm.

And they suffered themselves to be laden with irons, they, their wives, and their children. And those who had said, We are kings, digged as it were a great cavern ; and there they shut up the whole human race, like as the beasts are shut up in a stable.

And the tempest arose and scattered the clouds, and the thunder growled, and I heard a voice which said, The serpent has overcome a second time, but not for ever. And, after this, I heard only confused voices, and laughter, and groans, and blasphemies.

And I understood that there was to be a reign of Satan before the reign of God. And I wept, and I hoped.

And the vision which I saw was true : for the reign of Satan is accomplished ; and the reign of God will be accomplished also ; and they who said, We are kings, shall be in their turn enclosed in the cavern with the serpent, and the human race shall come out from it ; and it shall be to them as a new birth, as the passage from death unto life. Amen.

LOVE AND SYMPATHY.

You are the sons of the same father, and the same mother has nursed you : why, then, do you not love one another like brethren ? and why is it that you rather treat each other as enemies ?

He who loves not his brother is accursed seven times ; and he who makes himself the enemy of his brother is accursed seventy times seven.

This is wherefore kings and princes, and all those whom the world calls great, are accursed : they loved not their brethren, but they treated them as enemies.

Love one another, and you will fear neither the great men of the earth, neither the princes, nor the kings.

They are only powerful against you, because you are not at unity with yourselves, because you love not each other as brethren.

Say not, He is of such a nation, and I am of another nation ; for all nations have had on earth the same father, who is Adam ; and in heaven the same father, who is God.

If one member be struck, the whole body suffers. You are all one body : if one amongst you be oppressed, the whole are oppressed.

If a wolf spring upon a flock, he devours not the whole of it immediately : he seizes a sheep, and eats it. Presently, when his hunger returns, he seizes another, and eats it also ; and so on until the last : for his hunger returns continually.

Be ye not, then, as the sheep, who, when the wolf has carried off one of them, are in terror for a moment, and then return to their pasture. For, think they, Perchance he will be satisfied with a first or a second prey : why should we disquiet ourselves about those whom he consumes ? What is that to us ? There will but remain to us more grass.

Verily, I say unto you, Those who think thus within themselves are marked out to be the first food for the beast who lives upon flesh and blood !

RASH JUDGMENT.

When you see a man led to prison or to punishment, be not hasty within yourselves to say, Such a one is a wicked man, who is guilty of crime against his brethren :

For peradventure he is a good man, who has endeavored to serve his brethren, and who is punished for it by their oppressors.

When you see a whole nation laden with fetters, and given over to the executioner, be not hasty within yourselves to say, This nation is a violent nation, and has endeavored to trouble the peace of the earth :

For peradventure such a nation is a nation of martyrs, who die for the salvation of the human race.

Eighteen centuries ago, in a city of the East, the priests and kings of that time nailed to a cross, after having beaten with rods, one whom they called a Seditious man and a Blasphemer.

But, on the day of his death, there was in hell an exceeding terror, and in heaven great joy :

For the blood of the just had saved the world.

JUSTICE, EQUALITY, HUMILITY, AND CHARITY.

Why do animals find their sustenance each according to its species? It is because none amongst them rob the portion of others; and that each contents itself with what is sufficient for its necessities.

If in a hive a bee were to say, All the honey that is here is mine; and that thence he should go on to dispose as he would of the fruits of the common laborer, what would become of the other bees?

The earth is as one great hive, and the inhabitants thereof are as the bees.

Each bee is entitled to the portion of honey necessary to his subsistence; and if amongst men there should be one only who wants this necessary, it is because justice and charity have disappeared from amongst them.

Justice is life, charity is yet rather life; a gentler, a more bountiful life.

There have been false prophets, who have persuaded some men that all the rest were born for them; and that which these men believed, others believed also on the words of the false prophets.

When this lying speech prevailed, angels in heaven wept; for they foresaw how many wrongs, how many crimes, how many evils, were going to be let loose upon the earth.

Men equal amongst each other are born for God only, and whoever says to the contrary is a blasphemer.

Let him who would be the greatest amongst you be the servant, and let him who would be the first among you be likewise the servant of all.

The law of God is a law of love; and love vaunts not itself above others, but sacrifices itself for others.

He who says in his heart, I am not as other men, but other men are given to be subject to me, that I should dispose of them after my pleasure, — this man is the child of Satan.

And Satan is the king of this world, for he is the king of all those who think and act thus; and those who think and act thus have made themselves, by his counsels, the masters of the world.

But their dominion will be but for a time; and the end of that time is already near.

A great battle will be achieved, and the angel of justice and

the angel of love will strive with those who shall have armed themselves to re-establish amongst men the reign of justice, and the reign of love.

And many shall die in this combat, and their name shall dwell upon earth as a ray of the glory of God.

Therefore, ye who suffer, take courage, strengthen your hearts; for to-morrow will be the day of trial, the day in which each ought joyfully to lay down his life for his brethren, and that which follows after shall be the day of deliverance.

UNION AND CO-OPERATION.

When a tree stands alone, it is beaten by the winds, and despoiled of its leaves; and its branches, instead of waving on high, droop as if they sought the earth.

When a plant is alone, finding no shelter from the heat of the sun, it languishes, withers, and dies.

When man is alone, the wind of power bends him towards the earth, and the heat of the covetousness of the great men of this world absorbs the sap that nourishes him.

Be not, then, as the plant and as the tree that are alone; but unite one with another, and mutually strengthen and shelter each other.

So long as you shall be disunited, and that each thinks but of himself, you have nothing to expect but suffering, and misery, and oppression.

What is weaker than the dove, what more defenceless than the swallow? Nevertheless, when the bird of prey appears, the swallows and the doves succeed in driving him away by gathering together around him, and pursuing him together. Take example by the dove and by the swallow.

He who separates himself from his brethren, Fear follows him when he walks, sits down by him when he rests himself, and quits him not even during sleep.

Then if any one should inquire of you, How many are you? reply, We are one; for our brethren are us, and we are our brethren.

God made neither small nor great, neither masters nor slaves, neither kings nor subjects: he made all men equal.

But some amongst men are greater in strength, or in stature, or in mind, or in will; and these are they who seek to subjugate

others, when pride or covetousness quench in them the love of their brethren.

And God knew that it would be so ; therefore he commanded men to love one another, that they might be united, and that the weakest might not fall beneath the oppression of the strong.

For he who is stronger than one will be weaker than two, and he who is stronger than two will be weaker than four : thus the weak shall fear nothing, when, loving each other, they shall be truly united.

A certain man was travelling over a mountain ; and he arrived at a place where was a rock, which, having rolled across the path, had filled up the whole ; neither was there, besides this road, any other egress, neither to the right nor yet to the left.

Now this man, seeing that he could no longer continue his journey because of the rock, essayed to move it that he might make himself a passage ; but he wearied himself much in his labor, and his efforts were unavailing.

Then he, seeing this, sat down in heaviness, and said, What shall befall me when night shall come and overtake me in this solitude, without food, without shelter, without any defence, at the hour when the wild beasts issue forth to seek their prey ?

And whilst he thus thought within himself, another traveller arrived ; and he, having done like as the first had done, and having found himself utterly powerless to roll away the rock, sat down in silence, and hung down his head.

And after this one, there came others also ; but none amongst them was able to move the rock ; and the fear of them all was great.

At length one amongst them said to the others, My brothers, let us pray to our Father who is in heaven : it may be that he will have pity upon us in this distress.

And his words being finished, they prayed fervently to the Father who is in heaven.

And when they had prayed, he who had said, Let us pray, said again, My brethren, that which none of us could do alone, who knows whether we might not be able to accomplish together ?

Then they arose, and with one accord they pushed the rock ; and the rock yielded, and they pursued their path in peace.

The traveller is man ; the journey is life ; the rock is the miseries which beset him at every step on his passage.

No man is able alone to lift up this rock ; but God has measured the weight of it in the balance, so that it shall never stay the passage of those who journey together.

LABOR, OPPRESSION, AND SLAVERY.

God hath commanded all men to labor, and each has his task, whether of body or of mind ; and those who say, I shall never labor, these are the most wretched.

For as the worms consume a dead body, so vices consume him ; and if not vices, then is it lassitude.

And when God ordained man to labor, he concealed a treasure in the labor ; because he is a Father, and the love of a father killeth not.

And he who makes a good use of this treasure, who wastes it not as a madman, for him there comes a time of rest, and he is as men were in the beginning.

And God gave them yet this commandment, Help one another, for there are amongst you the weaker and the stronger, the infirm and the healthy ; and nevertheless they must all live.

And if you do thus, all shall live ; for I will repay the pity you have had for your brethren, and I will render your labor more productive. Now, there was formerly a wicked man, one accursed of heaven. And this man was strong, and he hated labor. Therefore he said, What shall I do ? If I labor not, I shall die ; and labor is insupportable to me.

Then a thought of hell entered into his heart. He went forth in the night, and seized some ones of his brethren whilst they slept, and laded them with chains.

For, said he within himself, I will compel them with rods and with whips to labor for me, and I will eat the fruit of their labor.

And he did even as he had imagined ; and others, seeing that, did likewise, and men were no longer brethren : they were masters and slaves.

That day was a day of mourning over all the earth.

And long after there arose another man more wicked than the first, and more accursed of heaven.

Seeing that men had everywhere increased, and that their multitude was innumerable, he said within himself, —

Perchance I might easily enchain some, and compel them to labor for me ; but they must be fed, and that would diminish my profits. Let us do better ; let them labor for nothing. They will verily die ; but, as their number is great, I shall heap up riches before they shall have diminished much, and there will always remain of the treasures enough.

Now, all this multitude lived upon that which they received in exchange for their labor.

Having spoken after this manner, he addressed himself to certain amongst them, saying to them : You labor for me during six hours, and a piece of money is given you for your labor.

Labor during twelve hours, and you will gain two pieces of money ; and you will live better, you, your wives, and your children.

And they believed him.

Then said he again to them : You labor but the half of the days of the year : labor all the days in the year, and your gain will be double.

And they believed him again.

Now, thenceforth it happened that the quantity of labor having become greater by the half, whilst the necessity for labor was not greater, the half of those who formerly lived by their toil no longer found any one to employ them.

Then the wicked man, whom they had believed, said unto them : I will give work to you all, upon condition that you labor for me the same time, and that I pay you but the half of that which I paid you before ; for I wish indeed to render you assistance, but I cannot ruin myself.

Then, as they were hungry, they, their wives, and their children, they accepted the proposal of the wicked man, and they blessed him ; for, said they, he restores us to life.

And, continuing to deceive them in like manner, the wicked man continually increased their labor, and diminished their hire. And they died for lack of sustenance, and others eagerly supplied their places ; for the poverty had become so great in this country, that whole families sold themselves for a morsel of bread. And the wicked man, who had lied unto his brethren, heaped up greater riches than the wicked man who had enchained them.

The name of the latter is Tyrant ; the other has no name but in hell.

THE LOAVES.

MAN'S need and suffering are all about us.
 Walk any way thou wilt, — an outstretched hand,
 A pleading face, is still upturned to thee.
 And God saith, "Give." "Give as thou wouldst receive."
 So Jesus unto those poor fishermen,
 Who, without purse or scrip, and scarcely food
 Sufficient for themselves, looked pityingly
 On the vast, weary, fainting multitude,
 Which, when the tension of the earnest soul,
 Listening to truth unheard, undreamed till then,
 Relaxed again, — first felt the body's cravings,
 For which was no supply, far in the wild,
 Away from home, — wives, children, drooping round them, —
 Thus spake the Son of man, — "Give them to eat!"
 Mocked he their deep necessity?

"Whence, Lord,"

The wondering disciples cry, "should we,
 Here in this barren place, find bread enough
 To feed five thousand?" "*Have ye not a loaf?*"
 This was their answer, and the throng was fed.

Then, when thou lookest on the woes of man,
 Be not disheartened at thy little means,
 Or ask, "How, Lord, can I do aught to aid?"
Offer thy loaf, and God shall multiply
 To thee and them the gift of ready love.
 Whatever, in the wilderness of life,
 Its griefs, and cares, and thick perplexities,
 Thou hast that others need, — be it a word
 Of counsel or of sympathy, — a drop
 Of cooling water to the spirit parched
 With fevered agony, — a glance, a pressure
 Of the kind hand, that silently would say,
 "I too have suffered, and I feel for thee;"
 Or even, in truth, a crust, a morsel, spared
 From a scant meal, to feed a hungrier brother, —
 Each — all — will God, through thy Redeemer, bless,
 Even as he did the loaves in Palestine.

A. D. T. W.

